

# Teton County Historic Site Survey

## 1. Name of Property

historic name D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

other name/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 242 N Glenwood Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Jackson ☐ vicinity

state Wyoming code WY county Teton code 039 zip code 83001

## 3. Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

## 4. Category of Property

(check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

## 5. Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>1</u>	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

## Property Owner

name/title Alton A. Parker and Carol A. Parker

street & number P. O. Box 486 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Jackson state WY zip code 83001

## Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

## Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

## National Register Status:

- ☒ Eligible ☐ Unevaluated  
☐ Not Eligible ☐ District Potential

**6. Function or Use****Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Hotel

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**Current Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Hotel

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**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Commercial

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**foundation** concrete

**walls** wood / stone

**roof** asphalt shingle

**other**

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

Commerce

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1947 - 1955

**Significant Dates**

1947, 1955

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other Name of repository:

Teton County Historical Society

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property less than 2 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/2 5/1/9/1/3/9 4/8/1/4/4/0/2  
Zone Easting Northing2 1/2 / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing3 1/2 / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing4 1/2 / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10**11. Form Prepared By**

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Maps**
- **Photographs:** Representative photographs of the property.

# Teton County Historic Site Survey

## Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 5

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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### Narrative Description

El Rancho Motel, which has operated under several names, is located on Glenwood Street, one block west and one and one-half blocks north of the town square. It consists of a U-shaped building on the south that opens to the north and a linear building on the north that faces the south. The north building is actually a composite structure in which three separate buildings are merged—a two-story linear motel building, and a former residence (now Nani's Restaurant) that was once associated with the motel, that itself was added onto with a separate structure (with a parallel gabled roof). The complex of buildings represents an open square with an opening—the main entrance—on the west off Glenwood Street. The original building is the U-shaped building on the south, which is contributing. The other buildings were added later. While the restaurant/residence was likely added during the period of significance, it has been altered from its original configuration. It and the two-story motel section are not, at this time, contributing features. The contributing features are the south building and a separate neon-illuminated sign structure.

The south building is a gable-roofed structure with board and batten on the outside on the west elevation and concrete blocks on the south elevation; ashlar wainscoting is used on the inside of the U where the entrances to the lodging units are located to add a more decorative appearance. . The board and batten is currently painted tan and the ashlar dark brown with white stones adjacent to the doorways. Originally the building seems to have been painted a light color and the ashlar its original gray/rose natural appearance. The roof is low-pitched with eaves (and exposed rafter tails) that extend well beyond the entrances and is supported by log columns at intervals. A wooden boardwalk runs continuously around the inside perimeter of the building; protected from the elements by the eaves, this walkway also keeps vehicles at a distance from the building itself. The units are arranged symmetrically with a double-hung window halfway between each doorway. The former motel office is located in the unit at the entrance on Glenwood which differs from other units in that it also has an entrance on the outside perimeter and that entrance is covered with a large gabled canopy that extends to the sidewalk by the street. On the inside of the perimeter, a small utility room with coin operated beverage machines has been extended several feet to the east and a glass sliding door added.

The residential building (now restaurant) and two-story motel located directly opposite the south building in the complex are currently considered noncontributing. Although at least one report indicates that the residence was in existence prior to the motel, one photograph from the 1950s shows the motel, but no residence. The two-story motel section was added after the period of historic significance.

Two signs are associated with El Rancho Motel and its predecessors. One sign remains at the rear (east) of the property. A two-paneled opaque sign painted a muted turquoise, the top panel is large with a curved top, announcing in white letters illuminated with neon tubing, El Rancho Motel, on the east side and in similar lettering, "You're a stranger here but once!" On both sides the bottom panel

# **Teton County Historic Site Survey**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section No. 7 Page 6

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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has the conventional Vacancy / No Vacancy neon lighting. The sign itself is mounted on a heavy steel pole. This sign is a contributing feature.

The second sign is more modest and is placed within the open gable of the canopy covering the entrance to the motel on Glenwood. It is simply a turquoise painted panel with white lettering. Of more recent vintage, this is integral to the motel itself and is thus not a separate feature.

El Rancho Motel is in excellent condition and is still in use as a motel, currently a part of the Anvil Motel operation with offices at the corner of Gill and Cache.

# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 7

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Sign, looking east. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2004.

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# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 8

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Looking southeast to office section. Photo: Michael Cassity 2004

# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 9

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Looking south.  
Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

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# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 10

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. East elevation.  
Looking northwest. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

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# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 11

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Former residence and current restaurant and two-story motel section, noncontributing. Looking northwest. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

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# Teton County Historic Site Survey

## Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 12

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and Criterion C, but at this point only the south portion of the motel—the U-shaped building that opens to the north—is regarded as contributing. The restaurant (and former residence) was originally associated with the motel, and the date of construction appears to have been within the period of significance, although that has not been verified. The other part, the two-story structure, was added after the period of significance.

The motel is eligible under Criterion A because of its role in the emerging tourist trade that became a vital part of the Jackson Hole economy and social structure in the post-World War II period. In the years immediately following the war, after the creation of the Jackson Hole National Monument, the tourist trade dramatically increased and the Jackson economy began to shift dramatically to serving that influx of tourists. Where earlier tourists had especially been the affluent travelers from the East who spent the summer at a dude ranch, increasingly the tourists were the middle class automobile travelers on shorter vacations. These people stayed in motels and the motels that emerged differed significantly from the rustic cabins of the pre-war years. The motels also thereby provided a business opportunity for budding entrepreneurs.

This business had its beginnings in 1946 when Dean Driskell and his nephew Glenn R. (Bob) Wiley purchased this land from Edna Ray Huff and built their motel, known as D & W Motel. The two formed their own construction company, Driskell and Wiley Construction, which built this motel. The motel opened in 1947.

The motel was representative of the main trend in the lodging business at the time in that it was built by the owners themselves (a pattern which would soon fade since the motels were becoming larger and more sophisticated than the earlier lodging operations), and it was locally owned and owner operated. The last feature raises yet another element common to these motels, in Jackson Hole and in the nation: gender roles in motel operation. One newspaper clipping notes, regarding the wives of the two partners in the business: "Wanona Wiley and Iris [Driskell] were known as the best cleaning ladies in town."

Dean Driskell himself later became president of the local Chamber of Commerce, another indication of the role of the tourist business and the locally-owned nature of the Jackson Hole economy.

The motel, located one block off Cache, which was also the primary highway through town, appears to have done well and within a decade the two partners constructed another motel, also known as the D & W, slightly north in the same block but fronting on Cache. The motel continued in use, evidently in conjunction with the new building on Cache since the 1955 telephone directory carries an advertisement indicating that the D & W (no address) included "24 Strictly Modern Units." A 1960 tourist brochure notes that D & W Motel includes "24 modern steam heated units – all soundproof" with "15 units off highway," the latter being a reference to this part of the motel. This motel was

# **Teton County Historic Site Survey**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section No. 8 Page 13

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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separated and became known as El Rancho Motel at an unknown date. In 1964 there was not a separate listing for this motel in the telephone directory, but by 1976 legal documents refer to it as El Rancho. It appears that Driskell and Wiley sold the operation in 1965.

The motel is also significant under Criterion C because of its architectural features. This may not be immediately evident to the person who looks at the motel and identifies it only as one of the general class of modern motels operating in Jackson. Yet it is precisely its modern appearance which might suggest to some that it lacks a distinctive historical configuration that actually present the case for its significance. As Jackson Hole emerged from World War II, and as the nation's lodging business evolved, the tourist courts with their separate cabins were being replaced with the style of lodging known technically as a motor court in which the cabins or cottages, instead of being separate were now joined under one continuous roofline, usually arranged in an open U or V shape. This motel not only conformed to that new pattern, but also, in the words of one newspaper account, was "the first connected motel in Jackson." This building retains with excellent integrity the key identifying features of that innovation in lodging: the continuous roof and the U-shaped arrangement. The only modifications have been superficial—the painting of the ashlar, the addition of board and batten to one elevation, and the expansion of the office unit. The addition and alteration of the buildings to the north have not compromised the integrity of this building.

# Teton County Historic Site Survey

## Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9 Page 14

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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### Bibliography

Belasco, Warren James, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel 1910-1945* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

"Dean Driskell, 91, Lived Entire Life in Jackson Hole," *Jackson Hole News & Guide*, August 27, 2003.

"Dean Driskell's Hard Times and Laughs," *Jackson Hole Guide*, September 25, 2002.

Interview with Dean Driskell, September 25, 1983, Jackson Hole Historical Society Oral History Collection.

Interviews with current owners at Anvil Inn, June 8, 2005.

"Iris Driskell," *Jackson Hole Journal*, 29 May – 4 June 2004.

Jakle, John A., Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Land Records, Office of the County Clerk, Teton County, Wyoming.

"Old Timers Celebrate a Lifetime of Marriage," *Jackson Hole Guide*, February 14, 2001.

Telephone Directories, Mountain States Telephone Company, 1946, 1948, 1953, 1955, 1964.

# **Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet**

Section No. 10 Page 15

D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel

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## **Geographical Data**

### Verbal Boundary Description

This property consists of lots 13, 14, 15, block 1, Simpson Addition, Town of Jackson.

### Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the original D & W Motel / El Rancho Motel.